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Undergraduate students' perceptions and motivations for nursing: Implications for education, practice, and workforce sustainability

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Abstract: This study aimed to determine the undergraduate nursing students' perceptions of the profession, factors influencing their decision for entry to nursing education, strategies to increase retention and entry, and health service capacities to strengthen the profession. A quantitative normative, cross-sectional survey was used. Descriptive statistics were used for the demographic data, perception of nursing, and factors of entry to the profession. Participants were drawn from nursing students enrolled in the Higher Institute of Medical Science and Technology and the Faculty of Nursing in Tripoli, Libya. A total of 100 nursing students from different semesters of their program were the respondents, selected through a convenience sampling technique. The questionnaire was distributed after expert validation and consideration of ethical issues through hand-delivery in classrooms. For both the Diploma and Bachelor of Science in Nursing programs, the statement "Nursing is an important profession for individuals, families, and society" obtained the highest average weighted mean (AWM = 2.84), followed by the perception that "Society's view of nursing is positive" (AWM = 2.81). Conversely, the lowest overall score was recorded for the item "Nursing professionals can build a career in the educational field" (AWM = 2.44), followed by the perception that "The nursing profession provides high financial income" (AWM = 2.46). A mixed perception of nursing, with both positive and negative aspects, was noted among respondents. Their motivations for entering nursing education and becoming a nurse encompass both intrinsic and extrinsic factors. There is a need to enhance the image and perception of the nursing profession, as well as to highlight the benefits of pursuing a career in nursing. Health policymakers, nursing education, and practice should enrich programs that highlight the image of nursing in terms of importance and contribution to health and well-being.

Introduction

The global shortage of nurses is a big threat to the quality and viability of health systems worldwide [1]. Nurses are essential to the healthcare system, indispensable in safeguarding public health. It has been identified as crucial to the global achievement of Sustainable Development Goals. They play a strong role in health policy and achievement of health targets [1-2]. They were the frontliners during the COVID-19 pandemic. Hearken back to the exacerbation of some who died in service, while others leave the profession [3-4]. The WHO reported that,

among all countries worldwide, the largest needs-based shortage of nurses is in Southeast Asia and Africa [5-6]. This comes as no surprise in Libya. After the Libyan revolution in 2011, the country's nursing workforce has been struggling. Libyan nursing schools have focused on rebuilding the country's supply of nurses after foreign nurses left the country [8]. This study is in line with the Libyan national policy to strengthen the leadership of the nursing and midwifery professions at the level of public policy, academic institutions, and clinical practice [7]. To reorganize the professions according to international standards, ensuring the provision of high-quality and efficient healthcare services at the health system, students' voices provide transparency and legitimacy. It provides structural evidence for improvement, support, and specific management of the nursing profession. An in-depth understanding of their perception of the nursing profession and what drives them will enhance improvement in nursing education, nursing practice, nursing administration, and nursing research in Libya. This study is not just an academic exercise but a diagnostic tool. This is to reveal the psychological and social readiness of Libya's future nurses, which can then be transformed into policy, curriculum, and workforce strategies to strengthen the country's health service capacity [8]. In essence, the student nurses' perceptions are not just opinions; they are predictive indicators of workforce sustainability. Thus, this study aimed to explore the perceptions and reasons for choosing Nursing as a career among Diploma and Bachelor's nursing students in Libya. It specifically provides evidence to the following research objectives: Classify the nursing students' perception of the professional identity of Nursing into positive, negative, or mixed, identify the motivation of nursing students to enter nursing courses as intrinsic and extrinsic factors, enumerate the ways to elevate nursing education as well as increase retention and student entries, and escribe the health services capacities that can be strengthened based on the perceptions of the nursing students on the nursing profession.

Nursing students either possess positive or negative attitudes and perceptions about the nursing profession. Findings of an integrative review revealed that the COVID-19 pandemic has certainly caused a more positive shift in the public image of nursing by making the reality of this profession more visible to the public on a global basis. It is difficult to eradicate the deeply established misconceptions of nurses and the nursing profession, including its traditional negative stereotypes and misconceptions. A study found that this is because the image of the nursing profession is tightly interdependent with each country's cultural background and history [10]. A positive professional image can attract new entrants and sustain motivation, while negative perceptions may contribute to shortages and high turnover rates [9]. A scoping review's findings categorize themes and classify the factors or entry to the nursing profession. Six themes specific to personal desire, social influence, career opportunities, job flexibility, nursing educational program, and the impact of the pandemic emerged. These highlight how personal motivations, social dynamics, systemic factors, and unpredictable chance elements shape nursing students' decisions [11]. Addressing systemic barriers like intrinsic and extrinsic barriers of entry to the profession, as well as enhancing diversity in a diploma or a bachelor's degree in nursing, aligns nursing education with cultural and regional healthcare needs. The strategies to improve accessibility, inclusivity, and collaboration of the healthcare institutions and education can improve the image of the profession. It is found to strengthen recruitment and retention, preparing nursing professionals to meet the challenges of an evolving healthcare environment. African study suggests that female students are influenced by altruistic reasons, namely having a passion for nursing, a desire to help others, and making a difference in society, but male respondents tended to rate financial and job stability highly [12]. The students' parents' influence on nursing career choice, and knowing someone in the health system, encourage the recruits to choose nursing as a career [12]. Instead, a concept analysis of Nursing classified it into intrinsic elements (professional spirit, professional knowledge, and professional skills) and extrinsic (appearance, language, and behavior) elements [13]. This explains that the public image of nursing is dynamic and has evolved. It implies that the traditional public image of nursing can be improved through targeted interventions in nursing practice, management, and education.

Materials and methods

Study design: A quantitative normative cross-sectional study design was used to determine the nursing students' perception of the nursing profession, as well as the factors that influence them to be in nursing education.

Setting and study period. The survey was undertaken between May and June 2022 in a university and a higher institute nursing school in Tripoli, Libya. Both institutions are funded by the government, are the primary academic centers for nursing programs, and offer a bachelor's degree and a diploma degree in nursing consecutively. A Diploma in Nursing in Libya has three years to complete through a Higher Institute for Medical Sciences and Technologies, distinct from bachelor's programs, with four years academic program, provided by the University of Tripoli [14, 15]. The Bachelor of Nursing program, which is Libya's top 2 of Libya's Best Universities in Nursing, is aligned with four WHO strategic directions specific to education, workforce, leadership, and service delivery [16, 17]. The university, however, ranked first among Libyan universities, 136th in the Arab region in the QS Arab University Rankings 2026 [18].

Population and sampling: The population consisted of all undergraduate nursing students, ranging from the first semester to the last year of their course, from both academic institutions. A total of 100 nursing students were the respondents of the study through convenience sampling, where all eligible nursing students present during the data collection period were willing to participate in the study and provide informed consent. Those who declined to participate and were not present during the data collection were excluded from the study. Both institutions have the same number of samples (n = 50).

Data collection tool: Data was collected through a structured questionnaire designed to assess the perception of Nursing and reasons for entry to the profession. It comprised demographic data, including age, gender, and institution in section A. Section B has nine items about the reasons for undertaking the course, along with seven sentences on students' perceptions of Nursing as a profession. A four-point Likert scale was used to indicate the level of agreement for each item. Responses ranged from 1 = Strongly Disagree (SDA), 2 = Disagree (DA), 3 = Agree (A), and 4 = Strongly Agree (SA) [20, 21]. The instrument was constructed by researchers and then evaluated by three academic experts for face validity.

Ethical considerations: This study was approved by the Research Review Board of the institution (MJ-073, 2022). To ensure ethical clarity, prior arrangements were made to brief the students in the classroom regarding the nature and purpose of the study and to emphasize that their participation is voluntary. Informed consent was obtained directly from the nursing students before the commencement of the data collection.

Statistical analysis: Data gathered were entered and analyzed using Excel [19]. They were summarized using frequencies, percentages, and weighted means. No inferential statistics were applied in accordance with the study objectives. Analysis was based on the weighted mean range, verbal interpretation, and meaning [20, 21].

Table 1: Weighted mean range, verbal interpretation, and meaning of the perceptions of the nursing profession and its factors for entry

WM range	VI	Meaning
1.00 - 1.49	Strongly disagree	Strong negative perception (SNP)
1.50 - 2.49	Disagree	Moderate negative perception (MNP)
2.50 - 3.49	Agree	Positive orientation (PP)
3.50 - 4.00	Strongly agree	Very positive perception (VPP)

WM=Weighted mean VI = Verbal interpretation

Results

Table 2 displayed that the nursing students were F = 72 females or 72.0%, all within the age range of 18 - 25 years old, all Muslims. As for the nursing course, both Diploma and Bachelor's in Nursing have F = 50 or 50.0% each of the total respondents.

Table 2: Summary of demographic characteristics of nursing students

Profile	Category	Frequency	Percent
Age	Range: 18-25 years old	100	100
Gender	Male	28	28
	Female	72	72
Religion	Muslim	100	100
	Other religion	0	0
Nursing course	Diploma Nursing	50	50
	Bachelor of Science in Nursing	50	50

F: Actual count of respondents and %: percentage

Table 3 showed that for both courses of Diploma and Bachelor's in Nursing, 'Nursing is an important profession for individuals, family, and society' has the highest average weighted mean (2.84), followed by "Society's view of nursing is positive". However, the lowest overall score is the 'Nursing professionals can build a career in the educational field' AWM = 2.81, followed by 'the nursing profession provides high financial income'. DN students have the highest WM = 3.08 on 'Nursing is an important profession for individuals, family, and society.' For BN students, it's the 'Society's view of Nursing is positive', WM = 2.87. However, the perception of 'There can be advancement and development of Nursing in Libya' has the lowest WM = 2.61, interpreted as MNP for the DN students, while the perception of 'Nursing professionals can build a career in the educational field' has the lowest WM = 2.10 by the BN students, with an interpretation of MNP. All in all, both undergraduate nursing students have the WM = 2.62 or PP, but with MNP, mixed positive and negative perceptions of nursing as a profession.

Table 3: Perceptions of the nursing profession of nursing students

Perceptions of the nursing profession	DN	BSN	AWM	M	Rank
Nursing specialization has a future	2.95	2.52	2.74	PP	3
Nursing is an important profession for individuals, families, and society	3.08	2.59	2.84	PP	1
The nursing profession provides high financial income	2.65	2.27	2.46	MNP	6
There can be advancement and development of Nursing in Libya	2.61	2.47	2.54	PP	5
Society's view of Nursing is positive	2.75	2.87	2.81	PP	2
Nursing professionals can build a career in the educational field	2.78	2.10	2.44	MNP	7
The nursing profession is important in promoting health and education in the community	2.78	2.43	2.61	PP	4
Total	**2.8**	**2.46**	**2.62**	**PP**	

DN: Diploma Nursing, PP: Positive perception, BSN: Bachelor of Nursing, MNP: Moderate negative perception, AWM: Average weighted mean, M: Meaning

Table 4 reveals that nursing students' entry to the nursing course is 'personal desire, chose Nursing willingly', with a WM = 3.11, interpreted as positive perception, followed by 'the profession can help the family when they get sick', WM = 3.03, positive perception. In contrast, the least factors influencing their choice or entry into nursing are 'I have medical information that helps in various aspects of life', with WM = 2.58 positive perception, followed by 'a family in the nursing field' with WM = 2.61, positive perception. Cursory details show that DN students have the lowest WM = 2.46 on factors of 'Nursing is a humanitarian profession', as well as 'Nursing is one of the required specialties all over the world'. In this aspect, BN students have the lowest WM = 2.34 on 'I have medical information that helps me in various aspects of life', interpreted as MNP. In total, DN students' factors of entry to the nursing profession have the WM = 2.85, interpreted as PP, while BN students have WM = 2.77, PP, with AWM = 2.81, positive perception.

Table 4: Factors of entry of nursing students to the nursing course

Factors	DN	BSN	AWM	M	Class	Rank
Chose Nursing willingly, personal desire	2.91	3.32	3.11	PP	IF	1
A family member in the nursing field	2.73	2.48	2.61	PP	EF	8
First-class profession that teaches patience and commitment	2.77	2.66	2.71	PP	IF	6
The nursing profession can help the family when they get sick	2.86	3.20	3.03	PP	EF	2
Nursing is a humanitarian profession	2.46	3.14	2.80	PP	IF	4
An ideal profession to remain active and friendly	3.16	2.40	2.78	PP	IF	5
Nursing is one of the required specialties all over the world	2.46	2.93	2.69	PP	EF	7
Nursing provides an opportunity to work abroad	3.51	2.46	2.99	PP	EF	3
I have medical information that helps me in various aspects of life	2.83	2.34	2.58	PP	IF	9
Total	**2.85**	**2.77**	**2.81**	**PP**		

DN: Diploma Nursing, PP: Positive perception, BSN: Bachelor of Nursing, Class: Classification, AWM: Average weighted mean, IF: Intrinsic factor, M: Meaning, EF: Extrinsic factor

Table 5 presents the classification of the motivations of the nursing students to enter the profession of Nursing into intrinsic and extrinsic factors. The highest intrinsic factors for both DN and BN nursing students belong to 'Chosen Nursing willingly, personal desire' with AWM = 3.11, followed by 'Nursing as a humanitarian profession'. For the DN nursing, the highest WM = 3.16 belongs to 'an ideal profession to remain active and friendly', seconded by WM = 2.91, 'chose Nursing willingly, personal desire'. For BN students, they have the highest WM = 3.32 on 'chose Nursing willingly, personal desire', seconded with WM = 3.14 on 'Nursing as a humanitarian profession'. Overall, the DN has the highest WM = 2.83 in contrast to the BN students' total WM = 2.77, total AWM = 2.80. On the other hand, the intrinsic factors of DN and BN students 'nursing profession can help the family when they get sick, with AWM=3.03. This is followed by AWM = 2.99, 'nursing provides an opportunity to work abroad'. As for DN students, their highest extrinsic factor is 'nursing provides an opportunity to work abroad' with WM = 3.51, followed by 'the nursing profession can help the family when they get sick', WM = 2.86. For BN nursing students, however, their highest intrinsic factors are 'the nursing profession can help the family when they get sick', followed by 'nursing is one of the required specialties all over the world', with WM = 3.20 and 2.93, respectively. The DN students' AWM =2.89 and 2.77 for BN students resulted in a total AWM = 2.83. A brief look at the WM of the factors, one will see that DN students have higher WM on extrinsic factors than intrinsic factors, while BN students have the same WM for both factors.

Table 5: Classification of the motivation of nursing students to enter the profession

Intrinsic factors	DN	BSN	AWM	Rank
Chose nursing willingly, personal desire	2.91	3.32	3.11	1
Nursing is a humanitarian profession	2.46	3.14	2.80	4
An ideal profession to remain active and friendly	3.16	2.40	2.78	5
First-class profession that teaches patience and commitment	2.77	2.66	2.71	6
I have medical information that helps me in various aspects of life	2.83	2.34	2.58	9
Total	**2.83**	**2.77**	**2.80**	
Extrinsic factors	**DN**	**BN**	**AWM**	**Rank**
The nursing profession can help the family when they get sick	2.86	3.20	3.03	2
Nursing provides an opportunity to work abroad	3.51	2.46	2.99	3
Nursing is one of the required specialties all over the world	2.46	2.93	2.69	7
A family member in the nursing field	2.73	2.48	2.61	8
Total	**2.89**	**2.77**	**2.83**	

DN: Diploma in Nursing, BSN: Bachelor of Science in Nursing, AWM: Average Weighted Mean

Table 6 presents the ways to elevate nursing education, increase student retention, and increase entry to the nursing profession. The bases of the strategies to remove the wrong perceptions of the profession are to address the lowest WM perceptions of the profession, and to remove intrinsic and extrinsic factors for entry to the profession; the items with the lowest WM are resolved.

Table 6: Strategies to elevate education, increase retention, and increase student entries

Basis of strategies	Education strategies	Retention strategies	Entry strategies
IF 1. I have medical information that helps me in various aspects of life. 2. First-class profession that teaches patience and commitment	1. Integrate values-like ethics and humanitarian care. 2. Use of simulation labs reinforces patience and resilience. Highlight nursing's role in saving lives	1. Mentorship programs to sustain passion. 2. Recognition of achievements 3. Opportunities for research and leadership	1. Campaigns showcasing nursing as a "calling." 2. Testimonials from alumni about fulfillment and growth
EF 1. A family member in the nursing field. 2. Nursing is one of the required specialties all over the world.	1. Scholarships and financial aid 2. Partnerships with hospitals for stipends 3. International exchange programs	1. Clear career pathways and promotions 2. Competitive salaries & benefits Flexible schedules reduce burnout	1. Publicize career opportunities abroad 2. Government incentives for enrollment, Media campaigns on nursing's economic value

Table 7 portrays the health services capacities that can strengthen the image of the nursing profession. This can also enhance the factors to increase entry and retention of nursing students in the profession. The bases of these are the negative perceptions of the respondents on the image of the nursing profession. As nursing students perceive limited academic or teaching career pathways for nurses, this can be strengthened with educational and professional development capacity. Strategic actions include the first, establishing postgraduate programs (MSN, PhD) locally and regionally. Second, create faculty development tracks for clinical instructors. Third, integrate teaching methodology and leadership modules in undergraduate curricula. Finally, strengthen collaboration between nursing schools and health institutions for joint training. Along with "The nursing profession provides high financial income", which indicates dissatisfaction with salary levels and perceived economic undervaluation, it is best to strengthen workforce Sustainability and economic incentive capacity. Strategic actions may include advocating for salary restructuring and fair compensation policies. Followed by introducing performance-based incentives and career progression schemes. Then, develop retention packages (housing, scholarships, continuing education). Last, promote nursing entrepreneurship and private practice opportunities.

Table 7: Health services capacities that can be strengthened

Negative Perceptions	Implication	Capacity area to Strengthen	Strategic actions
Nursing professionals can build a career in the educational field.	Students perceive limited academic or teaching career pathways for nurses.	Educational and Professional Development Capacity	1. Establish postgraduate programs (MSN, PhD) locally and regionally 2. Create faculty development tracks for clinical instructors 3. Integrate teaching methodology and leadership modules in undergraduate curricula 4. Strengthen collaboration between nursing schools and health institutions for joint training

The nursing profession provides high financial income.	Indicates dissatisfaction with salary levels and perceived economic undervaluation.	Workforce Sustainability and Economic Incentive Capacity	1. Advocate for salary restructuring and fair compensation policies 2. Introduce performance-based incentives and career progression schemes 3. Develop retention packages (housing, scholarships, continuing education) 4. Promote nursing entrepreneurship and private practice opportunities

Discussion

This study classifies nursing students' perceptions of the nursing profession's professional identity, identifies the motivations of nursing students to enter nursing courses as intrinsic and extrinsic factors, and enumerates ways to elevate nursing education and increase retention and student enrollment. Also, it describes the health services capacities that can be strengthened based on the negative perceptions of the nursing students of the nursing profession. The participants in this study were predominantly young (18 - 25 years), female, Muslim, and enrolled in DN and BSN programs, reflecting a demographic profile consistent with regional nursing education trends. Similar findings have been reported in Saudi Arabia and Egypt, where nursing cohorts are largely female and shaped by cultural and religious homogeneity, which influences professional identity and perceptions of nursing as a respected yet demanding career [31]. These traits influence stress and academic needs, highlighting the importance of tailored support systems, an extrinsic factor for nursing entry [31-33].

The nursing students have positive perceptions of 'nursing as an important profession for individuals, families, and society', with the highest weighted mean, followed by their 'society's view of nursing is positive'. However, they also view nursing negatively, which, if classified, falls in a category of having mixed perceptions. In terms of nursing's importance, it's recognized as crucial; however, they rated financial income and career opportunities in education lower. This result is in agreement with a study in Saudi Arabia wherein Nursing is perceived as socially valuable and promising, but with limited financial and academic advancement opportunities [22]. Mixed perceptions of the profession are also found in Nursing students in Southwest Ethiopia and Uganda, who mostly see nursing as a good and important [23, 24]. A study from India found that nursing students had a favorable perception of their profession [25]. In the opposite direction are the studies with nursing students, mostly having a negative perception of Nursing as a profession. In India again, nursing students have inadequate knowledge, and the majority of them have a negative attitude towards the nursing profession [26]. However, in the wake of COVID-19, the public's opinion and perception of the nursing profession compared to other professions and their attitudes toward nurses are more positive [27, 34, 35]. A study from Dammam, Saudi Arabia, revealed that nursing students have a poor perception of nursing [28]. They have a level of poor awareness, in addition to socio-cultural perceived barriers, which is seen as the main factor contributing to the negative public image of the nursing profession. Understanding these factors could contribute to implementing focused interventions to improve the negative stereotype of the nursing profession among Saudis. To continue, an integrative review on the public image of nursing revealed that the profession is influenced by both professional and systemic factors, with nurses themselves playing a critical role in shaping perceptions [29]. Thus, improving this image requires a collaborative effort involving nurses, healthcare organizations, and policymakers. Nurses must cultivate a confident and self-assured professional identity. That is to ensure the public's perception accurately reflects the vital contributions of the nursing profession. To help healthcare organizations adopt effective strategies to alleviate the shortage of the nursing workforce, nurses should promote the development of the nursing profession. This is where identifying the antecedents and consequences associated with the public image of nursing is important, as well as the factors associated with it [30].

There are intrinsic and extrinsic factors which determines entry of nursing students to the nursing course, namely 'personal desire, that they chose Nursing willingly', followed by 'the profession can help the family when they get sick', On the contrary, the least factors influencing their choice or entry into nursing are 'I have medical information that helps in various aspects of life', followed by 'a family in the nursing field'. Both factors affected their entry to the nursing profession. A scoping review emphasized addressing systemic barriers, enhancing diversity, and aligning nursing education with cultural and regional healthcare needs [30]. These are all needed in preparing nursing professionals to meet the challenges of an evolving healthcare environment. Therefore, strategic efforts to improve accessibility, inclusivity, and collaboration can be adopted to strengthen recruitment and retention of students in the program [11]. Since the professional identity of nursing is formed in a complex and dynamic process influenced by individual experiences, educational contexts, and socio-historical factors, both personal characteristics and external influences and their interactions in understanding the development of professional identity trajectories and content [36]. Also, self-efficacy, confidence in career choice, and sense of mission are factors that shape professional identity (PI) in nurses. It shows that both internal and external factors related to the nurse play a crucial role in PI, influencing how nurses perceive themselves within the context of the profession. It shows that both intrinsic and extrinsic factors play crucial roles in nursing entry [37-42].

In the intrinsic factors, 'I have medical information that helps me in various aspects of life', and 'First-class profession that teaches patience and commitment' have the lowest WM. Therefore, it is best to integrate nursing values like ethics and humanitarian care in the curriculum, deemed crucial [43]. Second, to recover from challenges facing nursing education, simulation-based training is recommended to develop nursing students' resilience in practicing complex scenarios in a safe environment [44]. There is a need to highlight the nursing role in saving lives. In nursing students' clinical duty, they will experience that adequate nursing care directly reduces patient mortality, underscoring nursing's life-saving role [45, 46]. To enhance motivation and retention of students in the nursing program, the first strategy is mentorship programs to sustain passion. It fosters belonging and passion, connecting students with nurse role models, which can reinforce their professional pride [47]. Second is recognition and achievements to improve nursing students' morale and reinforce the profession's value in the healthcare system [48]. Lastly, the provision of opportunities for research and leadership in the college of nursing, as these pathways empower nursing students to shape healthcare policy and innovation [49]. To enhance nursing professions' image and advocacy, campaigns showcasing nursing as a "calling" can fix, as framing nursing as a noble calling counters stereotypes and elevates societal image [50]. Lastly, testimonials from alumni about fulfilment and growth highlight personal fulfilment and career growth, inspiring new students to view nursing positively [24]. The resolution of problems that hinder nursing education, student retention, and entry into the profession is as follows: first, financial aid and hospital stipends directly lower barriers to entry [51, 52]. The faculty of nursing in the university offers free master's studies in the college. Second, exchange programs and career frameworks enhance professional growth. Third, competitive pay, flexible schedules, and government incentives improve retention. And lastly, the media campaigns and international recruitment elevate nursing's image and attract new entrants globally [53-56]. There are areas of health services that can be strengthened. First, the educational strategies (mentoring, career pathways, positive media image) build professional development capacity, while economic incentives (scholarships, stipends, competitive pay, international opportunities) sustain workforce retention and growth. Evidence-based interventions for retention of nursing students emphasize mentoring, orientation programs, and academic support as critical strategies to sustain student success [57]. Structured career pathways, faculty support, and targeted interventions enhance retention and professional growth in nursing education [57]. Media portrayals of nursing influence students' perceptions, highlighting the need for campaigns that elevate the profession's image and encourage enrollment [50, 58, 59].

Due to the mixed perception of nursing and the undergraduate nursing students' reasons for entry to the profession, it is recommended to start with educational strategies of mentoring, career pathways, and positive media image to build professional development capacity, while offering economic incentives such as scholarships, stipends, competitive pay, and international opportunities to sustain workforce retention and growth. Evidence-based interventions to enhance retention and professional growth in nursing education, as well as media portrayals of nursing, highlight the need for campaigns that elevate the profession's image and encourage enrollment. The necessity of keeping pace with scientific and technological development in the field of nursing through reviving continuing education courses and workshops within health and educational institutions, and exchanging experiences with Arab and foreign countries.

Conclusion: A mixed perception of nursing, with positive and negative aspects, was noted among respondents. Their motivations for entering nursing education and becoming a nurse encompass both intrinsic and extrinsic factors. There is a need to enhance the image and perception of the nursing profession, as well as to highlight the benefits of pursuing a career in nursing. Health policymakers, nursing education, and practice should enrich programs that highlight the image of nursing in terms of importance and contribution to health and well-being.

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